

Supermarket

Author: Kathleen Krull

Illustrator: Melanie Hope Greenberg



Genre

Narrative Nonfiction gives facts about real people and places in the form of a story. Look for interesting facts about supermarkets.

How does food get
to our supermarkets?


Shopping carts clang.
Magic doors whiz open and shut.
Colors glow under bright white lights.
So many breakfasts, lunches, and dinners!
It's all at a special, necessary, very real place:
the supermarket.

The supermarket is a whole world of its own.
Where does all this crunchy, munchy, sweet, sour,
fiery, frozen, fabulous food come from?

The doors don't really open by magic. When an electric "eye" overhead "sees" you coming, it starts a motor to open the doors.

It all begins on farms.
Our food comes from places with lots of sunshine,
rich soil, and clean water.

Farmers make decisions every day during the long
months of growing.
At harvesttime, workers pick the fruits and vegetables.
They pack everything neatly in boxes and load the
boxes onto trucks.



Certain states are famous for
certain foods. Iowa for popcorn,
Vermont for maple syrup, Michigan
for cereal, Wisconsin for cheese, Idaho for potatoes,
Massachusetts for cranberries, Florida for oranges,
California for grapes, Georgia for peaches
and peanuts.

Picking fruits and vegetables can be
painful, low-paying work. César Chavez
(1927-1993) became a hero for
workers when he founded the National
Farm Workers of America.



Small trucks, big trucks, gigantic trucks— all rev up their engines.
Every night, drivers take off from farms or warehouses.
They zoom down the highway toward your town.



Among many other foods, American Indians introduced to the rest of the world chocolate, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, peppers, and most important, corn. Some form of corn appears in more supermarket foods today than probably anything else.

In early America, most people were farmers.
American Indians taught the new arrivals what to grow.





Families grew all their own food.
 Later they traded food with one another
 to get other things they needed.
 They started using money to buy things
 at town marketplaces.



Soon there were general stores where you could buy
 almost anything and little, family-run grocery stores—
 “mom-and-pop” stores. Stores became bigger, dividing
 items into different departments.





Now we have an amazing place where every morning workers have a whole “super” market all ready for you.

They have unpacked thousands of boxes and arranged everything on the shelves, just so.



Bananas are the most popular fruit, followed by apples, watermelons, oranges, cantaloupes, grapes, grapefruits, strawberries, peaches, and pears.

You can find more variety in the fruit and vegetable section than anywhere else: fresh, juicy, strange, familiar.

Shoppers look, touch, sniff, compare, weigh—and watch out for automatic sprayers.

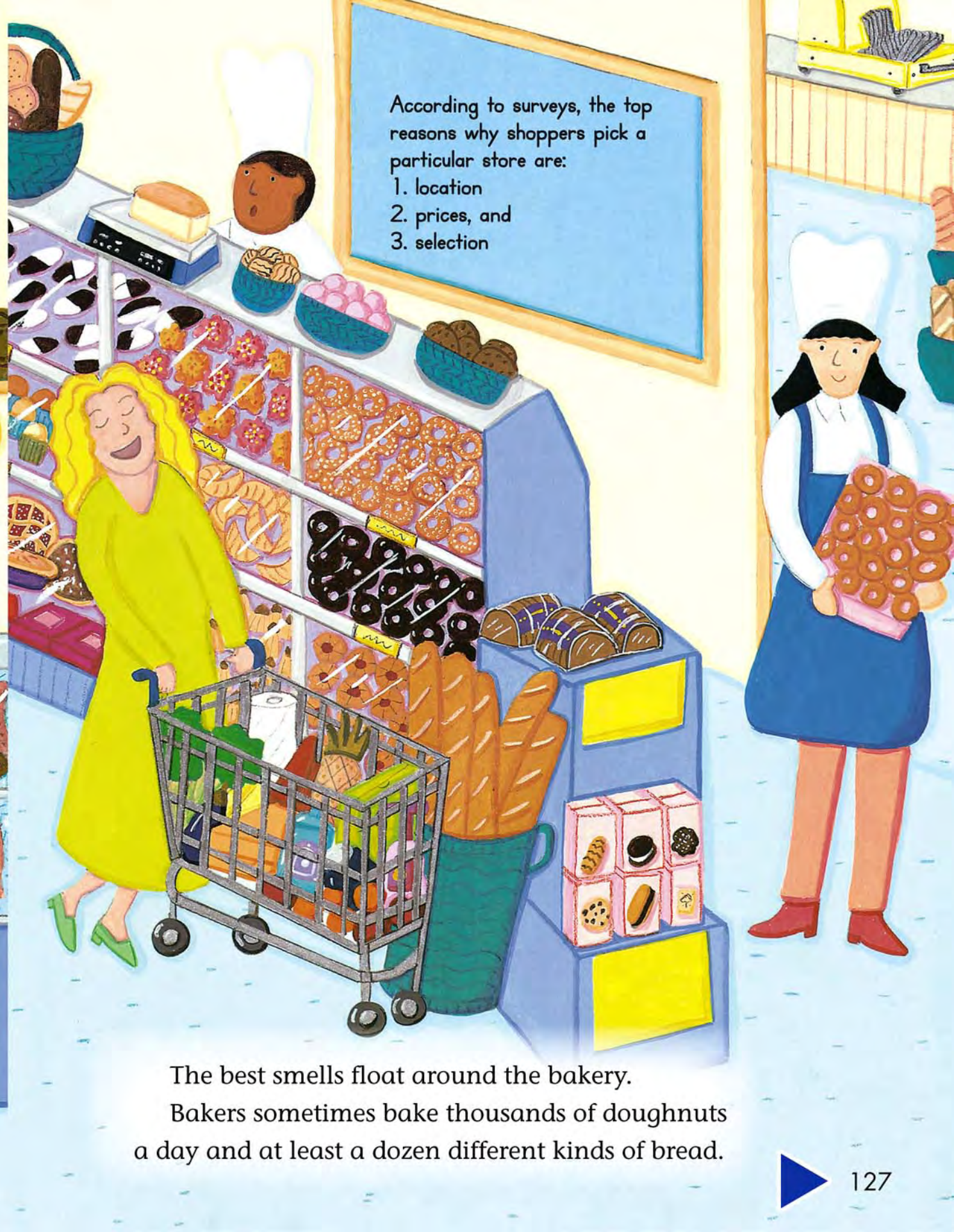
Beds of crushed ice keep the meats and fish fresh. Butchers cut or grind meat into different sizes and wrap packages in plastic.



For most of human history, food has often spoiled before it could be eaten. Not until the 1800s did people learn how to preserve food by sealing it inside metal cans. Around 1830, the English figured out a way to chill their food with machines.

According to surveys, the top reasons why shoppers pick a particular store are:

1. location
2. prices, and
3. selection



The best smells float around the bakery. Bakers sometimes bake thousands of doughnuts a day and at least a dozen different kinds of bread.

Just about everyone stops in the dairy section. Behind all the eggs, milk, yogurt, and cheese is a refrigerated area keeping everything cold.

A stamp on many fresh foods gives an expiration date: the day on which the food is no longer fresh.



A sweater is handy in the frozen foods section, where the air is coldest. Zippy music makes some people hum along or dance right in the aisle.



Americans spend more than
\$440 BILLION a year at
our supermarkets.



Over half of shoppers, especially
women, use a shopping list to
make sure they don't forget
anything. The average shopping
list contains 22 items. Still, over
half of what shoppers buy in a
store is not on their list.

The supermarket is never quite the same from day
to day. New items are added all the time, especially
from around the world. Some markets have other
stores right inside—worlds of their own.

